

Message Text

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INFO ALL EC CAPITALS
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USMISSION USNATO
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 PARIS 31870

USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (CARTER, JIMMY), FR
SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL VISIT BACKGROUND PAPERS: THE FRENCH
ELECTORAL COUNTDOWN

SUMMARY. THE RUPTURE BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES OF THE
LEFT HAS SENT SHOCK WAVES THROUGH THE FRENCH POLITICAL
SYSTEM. MITTERRAND'S LEFT ALLIANCE STRATEGY IS IN DEEP
TROUBLE. THE SOCIALIST PARTY (PS) IS STILL HOPING TO
PATCH THINGS UP, THOUGH WITHOUT OFFERING MAJOR CONCES-
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SIONS TO THE COMMUNISTS, BUT ITS DESIRE TO COME TO POWER
MAKES IT A HOSTAGE TO COMMUNIST INTENTIONS. THE MOTIVES
OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY (PCF), WHICH ALMOST CERTAINLY
PROVOKED THE SPLIT, ARE STILL OBSCURE. IF THE COMMUNISTS
HAVE DECIDED THAT THE DESTRUCTION OF SOCIALIST LEADER
MITTERRAND AND HIS PARTY ARE MORE IMPORTANT TO THEM
THAN PARTICIPATION IN THE GOVERNMENT, THEN BOTH PARTIES

OF THE LEFT WOULD BE IN FOR A MASSIVE DEFEAT IN NEXT MARCH'S ELECTION. IT IS TOO SOON TO COUNT THE LEFT OUT, HOWEVER. AN ELECTORAL ALLIANCE, EVEN A COMMON PROGRAM, COULD BE COBBLED TOGETHER QUICKLY. AND DESPITE ALL THE MUD-SLINGING ON THE LEFT, HALF OF FRANCE'S ELECTORATE STILL WANTS A CHANGE. SO FAR, GISCARD IS THE BIG GAINER, BUT EVEN HE IS NOT WITHOUT PROBLEMS. HE COULD PROBABLY LIKE AN OPTION TO CHIRAC'S CONSERVATISM, BUT ANY HINT THAT HE MIGHT BE PREPARED FOR SOME FORM OF A CENTER-LEFT ARRANGEMENT WITH THE SOCIALISTS (WHICH, IN ANY CASE, SEEMS EXCLUDED BEFORE THE ELECTIONS) COULD UNSETTLE THE MAJORITY AND GIVE THE LEFT PARTIES A WINDFALL OPPORTUNITY. IT IS AS GOOD A BET AS ANY THAT THE CURRENT CONFUSED STATUS QUO WILL NOT CHANGE UNTIL JUST BEFORE THE ELECTIONS OR EVEN UNTIL THE WEEK BETWEEN THE TWO ELECTORAL ROUNDS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE SEPTEMBER 23 SPLIT BETWEEN THE TWO MAJOR LEFT PARTIES MAY TURN OUT TO BE THE MOST IMPORTANT POLITICAL EVENT IN FRANCE SINCE THE 1974 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. TODAY THE FRENCH POLITICAL LANDSCAPE IS CLOUDED WITH AMBIGUITY. YET TWO FACTS ARE CLEAR. FIRST, THE COMMON PROGRAM BETWEEN SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNISTS -- OR EVEN AN ELECTORAL ALLIANCE BETWEEN THEM -- WILL BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO REVIVE. SECOND, FIFTY PERCENT OF THE FRENCH ELECTORATE NEVERTHELESS PERSISTS IN WANTING A

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CHANGE. THE POLARIZATION, UNIQUE IN FRANCE, BETWEEN LEFT AND RIGHT -- OR, MORE PRECISELY, BETWEEN THE PRO-PONENTS OF MOVEMENT AND THE DEFENDERS OF ORDER -- HAS NOT BEEN BASICALLY AFFECTED BY THE RUPTURE ON THE LEFT. WITH ALL THE PUBLIC FEUDING BETWEEN COMMUNISTS AND SOCIALISTS, VOTERS MAY HAVE CHANGED THEIR MIND AMONG PARTIES OF THE LEFT OR PARTIES OF THE RIGHT, BUT FEW OF THEM HAVE CROSSED OVER FROM ONE SIDE TO THE OTHER.

2. MOST POLITICAL LEADERS AS WELL HAVE CONCLUDED THAT THE LINE OF DIVISION BETWEEN LEFT AND MAJORITY WHICH

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WAS DRAWN FIVE YEARS AGO WILL HOLD UNTIL NEXT MARCH.
THUS, THE PARTIES OF THE RIGHT AND LEFT ARE DOING WHAT
THEY HAVE ALWAYS DONE BEFORE A TWO STAGE ELECTION: THEY
ARE TRYING TO CARVE OUT AS BIG A PART OF THE VOTE AS
POSSIBLE IN THE FIRST ROUND (12.5 PERCENT OF THE REGIS-
TERED VOTE IN THE "PRIMARIES" IS NEEDED TO QUALIFY FOR
THE SECOND ROUND RUN-OFF). NEGOTIATIONS AND BARGAINS
IN THE LEFT MAY BE DEFERRED UNTIL THE WEEK BETWEEN THE
TWO ROUNDS, SINCE WHAT COUNTS IS THE PARTIES' ACTUAL
ELECTORAL STRENGTH, RATHER THAN ESTIMATES IN PUBLIC
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OPINION POLLS. IT IS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT THERE WILL
BE NO FURTHER MAJOR SHIFTS IN PARTY TACTICS UNTIL AFTER
THE FIRST ROUND NEXT MARCH, ALTHOUGH MUCH WILL DEPEND
ON THE PCF'S ASSESSMENT AT ITS JANUARY CONVENTION OF THE
SUCCESS OF ITS PRESENT CAMPAIGN.

3. GISCARD'S REPUBLICAN PARTY, WHICH BOASTS 21 PERCENT
OF VOTER INTENTIONS, HAS MADE THE PRESIDENT ITS MAIN

CAMPAIGN THEME. RALLYING AROUND THE WINNER OF THE 1974 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IS THE PR'S WAY OF TRYING TO TURN A PARTY WHICH REPRESENTED ONLY 7 PERCENT IN THE LAST LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS OF 1973 INTO THE LARGEST COMPONENT IN THE MAJORITY. GISCARD'S PERSONAL PARTICIPATION IN THE CAMPAIGN WILL OF COURSE BE MORE INDIRECT. SO FAR, HE HAS SCRUPULOUSLY AVOIDED ANY COMMENT ON THE LEFT'S PROBLEMS AND CONCENTRATED ON SECTORAL INTERESTS: ENVIRONMENT, ARCHITECTURE, PAYMENTS TO RESETTLED FRENCHMEN FROM NORTH AFRICA, PENSIONS, ISRAEL, ETC. HE IS PLAYING A CONSCIOUSLY "PRESIDENTIAL" ROLE HIMSELF, AND IS SENDING HIS PRIME MINISTER TO THE CORNERS OF THE EARTH (THE US, THE USSR, CHINA, THE FRG, EASTERN EUROPE) TO GIVE BARRE A STATESMANLIKE IMAGE.

4. THE GAULLIST RPR HAS HAD TO REVISE ITS STRATEGY, WHICH WAS BASED ON ASSERTIONS THAT THE COMMON PROGRAM HAD BOUND THE SOCIALISTS TO THE COMMUNISTS. AFTER INITIAL HESITATIONS, THE RPR IS NOW MAINTAINING THAT NEITHER THE PS NOR THE PCF HAS IN ANY WAY CHANGED ITS POLICY AND THAT THE DANGER OF A LEFT VICTORY REMAINS GREAT. THE RPR HAS DECIDED TO LET THE DUST SETTLE IN THE LEFT AND -- REACTING TO POLLS, WHICH SHOW IT FALLING TO 20 PERCENT OF VOTER INTENTIONS -- CONCENTRATE ITS EFFORTS ON GRASS ROOTS CAMPAIGNING, WHERE IT HAS TRADITIONALLY SHOWN ITS

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STRENGTH. ITS PRESIDENT, JACQUES CHIRAC, CONTINUES TO SHOW THAT HE IS THE BEST STREET CAMPAIGNER IN THE MAJORITY, DRAWING DAILY OVERFLOW CROWDS AT EVERY STOP ON HIS CAMPAIGN TRAIL. CONCERNED ABOUT THE CONSERVATIVE, AUTHORITARIAN IMAGE HE PROJECTS AMONG THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND ON TELEVISION, HE HAS BEGUN TO STRESS SOCIAL THEMES SUCH AS SOCIAL SECURITY, PENSIONS AND WORKER PARTICIPATION IN COMPANY PROFITS. HIS TARGET IS TO WIN BACK THE POPULIST WORKING CLASS VOTE WHICH HAS GRADUALLY LEFT THE PARTY SINCE DE GAULLE'S EXIT FROM POLITICS.

5. THE MOOD IN THE SOCIALIST PARTY IS PESSIMISTIC. FORECLOSED FROM MAKING FURTHER CONCESSIONS TO THE PCF ON OUTSTANDING ISSUES (NATIONALIZATIONS, DEFENSE, MINIMUM SALARY, SALARY SPREADS, ETC.) AND THEREBY ALIENATING ITS MODERATE ELECTORATE, YET NOT IN ANY WAY TEMPTED AT THE MOMENT BY AN ALLIANCE WITH THE CENTER, THE PS FEELS CONDEMNED TO DEFENSIVE IMMOBILITY. IT IS REDUCED TO CRITICIZING THE GOF FOR THE ECONOMIC SITUATION AND DEFENDING ITSELF FROM PCF ATTACKS THAT IT HAS VEERED TO THE RIGHT. SO FAR THE PARTY, INCLUDING ITS LEFT-WING (CERES) FACTION, HAS HELD TOGETHER WELL. IT HAS LAUNCHED A CAMPAIGN AMONG ITS MILITANTS AND ELECTORATE, PROFES-

SING ITS LOYALTY TO THE COMMON PROGRAM AND LAYING THE
BLAME FOR THE LEFT'S PROBLEMS SQUARELY ON THE PCF'S
DOORSTEP. MITTERRAND HIMSELF HAS ENERGETICALLY PLUNGED
INTO THE CAMPAIGN, SETTING A NON-POLEMICAL TONE IN CON-
TRAST TO HIS PCF PARTNER MARCHAIS. IN PRIVATE, SOME PS
LEADERS WISHFULLY TALK ABOUT INCREASING THEIR FIRST-
ROUND VOTE TO OVER 30 PERCENT (THE INCREASE COMING FROM
A CENTER NO LONGER SCARED OFF BY AN ALLIANCE WITH THE
PCF). WITH SUCH A SCORE, SO THE THEORY GOES, THE PS
WILL BE IN A STRONGER POSITION EITHER TO INDUCE THE PCF
TO COOPERATE ON THE SECOND ROUND OR TO FORM A MINORITY
GOVERNMENT AS THE LARGEST PARTY IN FRANCE. BUT THE PS
ALSO UNDERSTANDS FULL WELL THAT IT IS JUST AS LIKELY
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THAT IT WILL LOSE VOTES BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF UNITY
BEING SHOWN IN THE LEFT. EQUALLY FRUSTRATING IS ITS
LACK OF LEVERAGE OVER THE PCF, EITHER DURING THE
CAMPAIGN OR BETWEEN THE TWO VOTING ROUNDS; THE PCF WILL
PROBABLY BE LESS COOPERATIVE ON THE SECOND ROUND, THE

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HIGHER THE PS SCORE ON THE FIRST.

6. IT IS ALMOST CERTAINLY THE COMMUNIST PARTY WHICH
PRECIPITATED THE LEFT CRISIS AND WHICH HOLDS THE KEY TO
ITS POSSIBLE RESOLUTION. THE PCF'S MOTIVES ARE OBSCURE;
IN TRADITIONAL COMMUNIST FASHION ITS THINKING HAS BEEN
IMPENETRABLE, EVEN TO THE SOCIALISTS, WHO ARE AS MUCH
IN THE DARK AS ANYONE ELSE. THE CONTEXT OF THE PCF
DECISION, HOWEVER, IS CLEAR. THE COMMON PROGRAM OF 1972
PUT THE SOCIALIST PARTY ON THE MAP; SINCE THEN IT HAS
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MADE MAJOR GAINS AMONG FRENCH VOTERS. ALTHOUGH THERE
HAVE BEEN COMMUNIST GAINS TOO (THE PCF INCREASED ITS
LOCAL POWER IN THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS OF LAST MARCH),
IN FIVE YEARS THE PCF HAS LOST ITS POSITION AS FIRST
PARTY ON THE LEFT. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, THREE NOT
MUTUALLY-EXCLUSIVE COMMUNIST MOTIVES SEEM PLAUSIBLE:
(1) THE PCF CANNOT ABIDE PLAYING JUNIOR PARTNER IN A
GOVERNING COALITION; (2) IT FAILED TO GET PS AGREEMENT
TO A LARGE ENOUGH NUMBER OF NATIONALIZATIONS AND OTHER
ECONOMIC DEMANDS TO GIVE IT THE ARMLOCK IT WANTS ON THE
ECONOMY; (3) IT DOES NOT WANT TO BE IN THE GOVERNMENT
DURING AN ECONOMIC CRISIS FOR WHICH IT COULD BE BLAMED.
IF THE FIRST OR SECOND MOTIVE ARE DOMINANT, THEN THE
PCF MAY NOT BE SATISFIED UNTIL IT HAS DESTROYED MITTER-
RAND AND CRIPPLED HIS PARTY. THE BEST WAY TO DO THAT
WOULD BE TO REFUSE BOTH A REVIVED COMMON PROGRAM AND AN
ELECTORAL ALLIANCE. SUCH A TACTIC WOULD DAMAGE THE PCF
AS WELL, DESTROYING ALL CHANCE OF ITS PARTICIPATION IN
GOVERNMENT -- PROBABLY FOR MANY YEARS -- AND REDUCE PCF
DEPUTIES TO A THIRD OF THE CURRENT NUMBER. BUT THE PCF
MAY FEEL THAT, WITH ITS SUPERIOR ORGANIZATION AND ITS
LONG-TERM STRATEGY, IT IS BETTER ABLE THAN THE PS TO
SURVIVE SUCH AN ELECTORAL DISASTER. ON THE OTHER HAND,
IF THE PCF DECIDED THAT A PLACE IN GOVERNMENT WAS MORE
IMPORTANT THAN THE DESTRUCTION OF MITTERRAND, AN ELEC-
TORAL ALLIANCE -- AND EVEN A COMMON PROGRAM -- COULD BE
NEGOTIATED QUICKLY, EVEN BETWEEN THE TWO ROUNDS.

7. MEANWHILE, THE PCF IS NOT LOOKING BACK. IT HAS KICKED OFF A MASSIVE EXPLANATION CAMPAIGN IN 190 MEETINGS ACROSS THE COUNTRY FOR ITS 30,000 CELL LEADERS. IN ADDITION IT IS PAYING SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE CHRISTIAN VOTE, WOMEN AND YOUNG PEOPLE, AND EXPECTS TO RE-CONFIDENTIAL

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CRUIT ITS 600,000TH MEMBER (SIC) THIS WEEK. IN ALL THESE WAYS, THE PCF IS AIMING ITS HEAVY ARTILLERY AT ITS PRINCIPAL ENEMY -- THE PS -- IN ORDER TO DESTABILIZE A PARTY IT CONSIDERS HETEROGENEOUS AND SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC, DISCREDIT ITS LEADER WHO HAS BECOME TOO POWERFUL, AND CUT INTO THE SOCIALIST ELECTORATE. THE PCF LINE IS SIMPLE: THE PS HAS BETRAYED THE COMMON PROGRAM BY TURNING RIGHT. IT IS TOO EARLY TO EVALUATE THE DEGREE OF SUCCESS OF THIS CAMPAIGN. THERE ARE SOME HINTS OF GRASS ROOTS RESISTANCE TO THE PRESENT LINE. NO DOUBT THE VAST MAJORITY OF PARTY MEMBERS WILL FALL INTO LINE, BUT ITS ITS WIDER ELECTORATE WHICH HAS BEEN NOURISHED ON THE "UNION OF THE LEFT THEME" FOR 5 YEARS AND WHICH FELT THAT IT WAS ON THE THRESHOLD OF POWER MAY NOT BE AS EASILY PERSUADED. IT IS THIS GROUP WHICH THE PS IS AIMING AT, BOTH TO LESSEN THE PCF CAMPAIGN AND TO CONVERT ON THE SECOND ROUND VOTE.

8. AS REGARDS ELECTORAL PROSPECTS, THE POLLS SHOW A MIXED PICTURE. THE MAJORITY REMAINS AT 47 PERCENT, THE LEFT AT 50 PERCENT, AND THE ECOLOGISTS, WHO TEND TO VOTE LEFT ON THE SECOND ROUND, AT THREE PERCENT. MORE DETAILED SURVEYS, HOWEVER, REFLECT HOW BADLY THE PS NEEDS PCF ASSISTANCE IN THE SECOND ROUND. SIMULATIONS (E.G. BY SOFRES/NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR) BASED ON DIFFERENT ASSUMPTIONS SHOW THAT THE LEFT STILL HAS A CHANCE OF WINNING -- BUT ONLY IF VOTING DISCIPLINE BETWEEN THE PS AND PCF REMAINS ABOUT AS GOOD AS IN THE PAST. ANYTHING LESS, AS LONG AS THE MAJORITY CONTINUES TO HOLD TOGETHER, WOULD SPELL DEFEAT FOR THE LEFT. HOW THESE LOSSES WOULD BE DISTRIBUTED WITHIN THE LEFT WOULD DEPEND ON THE VOTE; BUT, GIVEN THE FACT THAT THE PS HAS MORE POTENTIALLY WINNABLE PARLIAMENTARY SEATS TO LOSE THAN THE PCF, THE SOCIALISTS WOULD SUFFER MORE.

9. THE POLLS ALSO SHOW SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN THE
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PUBLIC VIEW OF THE PRINCIPAL LEADERS. GISCARD AND BARRE HAVE IN GENERAL BENEFITTED FROM THE LEFT'S TROUBLES, AS ONE WOULD EXPECT; MITTERRAND, MARCHAIS AND CHIRAC HAVE LOST IN POPULARITY. THE PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER SEEM TO HAVE GAINED BECAUSE THEY INCARNATE THE STATE,

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RATHER THAN PARTY POLITICS, WHILE THE LATTER THREE HAVE PUSHED TOO FAR THE PUBLIC'S TOLERANCE FOR ABSORBING POLITICAL EVENTS. GISCARD'S POPULARITY FOR THE LAST TWO YEARS HAS VARIED INVERSELY WITH THE EXTENT OF HIS PUBLIC EXPOSURE, REACHING THIS MONTH ITS HIGHEST APPROVAL LEVEL IN OVER A YEAR. HE SEEMS TO BE GIVING THE PUBLIC THE IMAGE IT WANTS OF ITS PRESIDENT, ALOOF FROM PARTY BICKERING AND ATTENDING TO THE AFFAIRS OF STATE.

THE PRIME MINISTER HAS BENEFITTED, BUT TO A LESSER
EXTENT, FROM THIS SAME ATTITUDE; HE IS STILL SEEN BY
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THE PUBLIC AS THE PROFESSOR, ECONOMIST AND DISTANT
MANAGER. TOGETHER, THE POPULARITY OF THE PRESIDENT AND
PRIME MINISTER IS SUCH THAT THEIR SUPPORT WILL BE CON-
SIDERED A DEFINITE PLUS FOR MAJORITY CANDIDATES, A SI-
TUATION WHICH CONTRASTS SHARPLY WITH ELECTIONS OVER
THE LAST TWO YEARS. MITTERRAND AND MARCHAIS HAVE BOTH
BEEN HURT, EXCEPT AMONG THEIR RESPECTIVE ELECTORATES,
ACROSS THE BOARD. OF THE TWO, MARCHAIS HAS FARED WORSE
AND HAS ALSO PICKED UP MOST OF THE BLAME IN THE PUBLIC'S
MIND FOR THE LEFT'S SPLIT. FINALLY, THE LEFT SPLIT HAS
PARTIALLY DEPRIVED CHIRAC OF HIS FAVORITE TARGET AND
HAS MADE MORE DIFFICULT ATTEMPTS TO SHAKE HIS RIGHTIST
IMAGE.

10. THE LEFT RUPTURE HAS RAISED SPECULATION HERE AND
ELSEWHERE ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A CENTER-LEFT COALI-
TION EMERGING, WITH THE SOCIALISTS JOINING GISCARD'S
FORCES AND WITH THE COMMUNISTS AND GAULLISTS IN EFFECT
FROZEN OUT. AT FIRST SIGHT THE PROSPECT MAY APPEAR
VIABLE. FIRST, IT IS GISCARD'S LONG-TERM OBJECTIVE.
SECOND, A SIGNIFICANT PART OF THE PS ELECTORATE WOULD
PRESUMABLY SUPPORT IT, SINCE A LARGE MAJORITY OF THAT
ELECTORATE CONSIDERS ITSELF CENTER-LEFT. THIRD, IT
WOULD BRING THE FRENCH SOCIALIST PARTY INTO THE MAINS-
TREAM OF EUROPEAN SOCIALISM, GIVING IT A MORE CENTRIST,
SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC ORIENTATION ALONG THE LINES OF ITS
MAJOR FELLOW-PARTIES, THE GERMAN SPD AND THE BRITISH
LABOR PARTY. NEVERTHELESS, THE POSSIBILITIES OF A CEN-
TER-LEFT GOVERNMENT IN FRANCE ARE NEGLIGIBLE BEFORE THE
ELECTIONS AND ONLY FAIR THEREAFTER. ITS CHANCES WOULD
DEPEND ON THE SEAT DISTRIBUTION IN THE NEW ASSEMBLY,
AND NOBODY CAN GUESS AT THESE FIGURES UNTIL THE PCF
DECIDES WHETHER TO SUPPORT PS CANDIDATES ON THE SECOND
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ROUND. APART FROM THE FACT THAT A CENTER-LEFT ALIGN-
MENT WOULD LEAVE THE TWO BEST-ORGANIZED PARTIES OUT IN
THE COLD, BOTH THE PS AND GISCARD WOULD HAVE TREMENDOUS
INTERNAL PROBLEMS. THE PS BELIEVES, PROBABLY WITH GOOD
REASON, THAT A MOVE TO THE RIGHT WOULD ALLOW THE COM-
MUNISTS TO FILL IN BEHIND. MOREOVER, THE SOCIALIST
LEADERSHIP IS ACUTELY AWARE OF ITS COMPROMISED HISTORY

(AS A CENTER-LEFT PARTY IT SUPPORTED THE ALGERIAN WAR), AND OF THE NEAR CERTAINTY THAT ITS LEFT-WING (AND PERHAPS MORE) WOULD SPLIT OFF IF IT TURNED TO THE RIGHT. IT IS FOR THESE REASONS THAT THE PS BELIEVES ITS ONLY COURSE OF ACTION IS TO CONSOLIDATE ITS GAINS AND EMERGE FROM THE FIRST ROUND AS THE LARGEST PARTY IN FRANCE. WITH 30 PERCENT OF THE VOTE, IT WOULD BE IN THE ENVIABLE POSITION OF LOOKING TO THE LEFT OR RIGHT TO FORM A GOVERNMENT, FORM A MINORITY GOVERNMENT OR EVEN REMAIN IN THE OPPOSITION UNTIL A MORE PROPITIOUS MOMENT (SUCH AS EARLY LEGISLATIVE OR PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS) COMES TO TAKE CONTROL.

11. FOR GISCARD THE PROBLEM IS A DWINDLING CENTER AND CHIRAC. THE GAULLIST LEADER CANNOT BE EXPECTED TO BRING THE MAJORITY TO A MARCH VICTORY ONLY TO SEE THAT MAJORITY SUBSEQUENTLY TRANSFORMED -- ANY MORE THAN THE PCF HAS FOUND ACCEPTABLE THE PROSPECT OF A LEFT GOVERNMENT DOMINATED BY THE PS. THUS, THE TRUCE WHICH EXIST IN THE MAJORITY COULD BE GREATLY ENDANGERED IF GISCARD'S PLANS, WHICH ARE PRESENTLY MASKED BY THE EUPHEMISM "ENLARGEMENT OF THE MAJORITY", WERE PUSHED TOO FAR AND TOO OPENLY. THUS, GISCARD WILL BE FACED OVER THE NEXT FIVE MONTHS WITH A DIFFICULT BALANCING ACT OF KEEPING THE LOYALTY OF ALL THE COMPONENTS OF HIS MAJORITY, YET PREPARING THE WAY FOR A LESS POLITICALLY RIGID FRANCE AFTER MARCH.

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